UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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Varieties.

Lo! from the East the ray of coming morn;
Lo! in a cradle lies a babe new-born:
Bright grows the sky, the shadows flee away,
Till thro' the clouds shines out the perfect day:
Thus shall the voice, now feeble, louder ring,
Till Christ, the new-born babe, of kings is King.
—W. G. Tarrant.

Jesus is certain that everything which he has and everything which he is to accomplish comes from this Father. He prays to him; he subjects himself to his will; he struggles hard to find out what it is, and to fulfil it. Aim, strength, understanding, the issue, and the hard must all come from the Father. This is what the Gospels say, and it cannot be turned or twisted. This feeling, praying, working, struggling, and suffering individual is a man who, in the face of his God, also associates himself with other men.—Prof. Harnack.

It fortifies my soul to know
That tho' I perish, truth is so;
That howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change;
I steadier step when I recall
That, tho' I slip, Thou dost not fall.
—Arthur Clough.

Rome, devoured by the gangrene of egotism, rotted and perished. Jesus came. He endeavoured not to save the perishing world by analysis. He spoke not of their interest to men whom interest had degraded. He laid down, in the name of heaven, some unknown axioms; and these few axioms did change the face of the world.—Mazzini.

If the naturalist can reproduce the form of an extinct animal from a few fossil bones, we may surely outline with some approximate accuracy the growth of soul that led up to the Sermon on the Mount and the Victory on Calvary.—J. H. Crooker, D.D.

I sent my soul through the invisible
Some letter of that after-life to spell;
And by and by, my soul returned to me
And answered, "I myself am heaven and hell."
—Omar Khayam.

An Open Letter for Open Minds.

Dear Friends,—Before you see my next letter, Christmas will be with us. And so I wish it may be a happy one for you all. Not a "merry" one in the mere matter of feasting, which in too many cases at that time is a dishonouring of Christ by drunkenness and gluttony, and which you shrink from as much as I; but rather in brightness, cheerfulness, and wholesome pleasantry. And the best way to have a really good, happy Christmas is by making others happy, by spreading the spirit of peace and goodwill abroad.

"Peace and goodwill," did I say? Would that it were possible everywhere! Then the horrible warfare between the Japs and Russians would be at an end; then the strife of classes and nations would be a thing of the past; then all men would be secure from the worst dangers of existence; and Unity would abound everywhere. Of course, I mean the Unity of Mankind, not our "Unity" Magazine, though I think you will agree with me in saying that worse things than that might happen.

That Unity of Mankind is what our "Unity" stands for; "Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" and goodwill. Unity amid diversity. There is even a unity of the trees of the forest, though not two leaves in the world are exactly alike. Unity means Brotherhood—a sharing of life and its opportunities. But there are many selfish antagonisms displayed in a needless struggle for existence which keep men apart from each other, and which shut some of our brothers and sisters out of their real sharing of life and opportunity. A true Peace Society would minimise all antagonisms, and seek to abolish every selfish kind of warfare, and would open the door of life to all. Man was not made to mourn, but to rejoice, and to have cause for rejoicing. May we all seek to give others much cause for rejoicing this Christmas, celebrating the birthday of the Man of Nazareth by goodwill to all.

PARSON PAGE.

When we read the thrilling pages
Of that life so pure and true,
Stars of hope across the ages
Rise in glory on our view.

By the Way.

The Rev. S. Gardner Preston, of Hastings, predicts that ultimately there will be only two kinds of churches in the land—the Roman Catholic and the Unitarian; the one appealing to the authority of the Church, the other to the authority within.

The Rev. Edgar Daplyn has been expressing himself as having come into Unitarianism from the outside (the Roman Catholics), and spoke of the joy of entering into liberty where there is free movement of thought, and room to grow and every man able to speak his own convictions.

The president of the (London) Working Men's Club and Institute Union, Mr. S. S. Tayler, has recently been honoured on his 80th birthday, at a special meeting celebrating forty years of his services to the Union, by the presentation and unveiling of his portrait. Mr. Tayler is an ardent Unitarian, has served several years as a London County Councillor, and is the father of the Rev. Hugon S. Tayler, M.A., Unitarian minister of Dukinfield, Manchester.

The Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., Principal of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, commends "Think and let think" as a good motto.

A Social Questions Committee has been appointed by the Governing Body of the Manchester District Association of Unitarian Churches.

The British and Foreign Unitarian Association (London) does foreign mission work in India and Australasia.

Bolton Unity Church has been holding some largely attended services of the anti-Torrey kind. In Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, and Bolton, Dr. Torrey, the orthodox evangelist, has denounced Unitarianism, and unwittingly has powerfully helped it, for he has provoked the Unitarians into speaking in defence of their principles, and Dr. Torrey's booming has secured them a good hearing.

There is much orthodox credulity in the world yet. A meeting of the Lord's Day and Protestant Convention recently passed a resolution of protest concerning some statements made by Dr. Armitage Robinson, Dean of Westminster, declaring that "in denying the literal truth of the narratives of the formation of Adam and Eve, and of their fall in the Garden of Eden, you are undermining the faith of Godly people."

The Rev. Charles Peach (Manchester) says: "I am a Unitarian because Unitarianism stands for everything that is broad, intelligent, progressive, sympathetic; it means holding the faith we have attained to, but keeping open heart and conscience for the reception of new light."

Dr. Washington Gladden (American Congregationalist) has said that "the largest number of the best hymns written within the past twenty-five years have been written by Unitarians." This is a generous compliment.

The more active movements to substitute arbitration for war which are being made just now, as well as overtures to end the horrible slaughter in the East, must surely make for the "unity" of all nations; and the more determined efforts being made to solve the problem of the unemployed must bring us a little nearer to that brotherhood which is also the "unity" of man.

Sir Oliver Lodge, man of science, in reply to the Bishop of Rochester, thinks that such expressions as "righteous vengeance," "angry Father," "wrathful Lamb," unsatisfactory.

The Episcopal "Church Times" gives praise to the Unitarian Dr. Warsehauer's book, "Anti-Nunquam," as "a masterly and scathing exposure" of Mr. Blatchford.

The Bishop of Ripon is advocating a scientific theology.

Unitarianism.

By BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

Unitarianism has been a good deal spoken of, but not many people seem to know what it really is. Many have an idea that it is a dreadful kind of infidelity, to be shunned as wicked and dangerous. Yet they know that in public life Unitarians are among the most respected and reliable men; and certainly some of those who have stood before the world as Unitarians—such ministers as Dr. Channing, John Hamilton Thom, and Dr. Martineau; such writers as Oliver Wendell Holmes, the poet H. W. Longfellow, the eminent physiologist Dr. W. B. Carpenter, and his equally eminent sister, Mary Carpenter—have been of a deeply thoughtful and religious spirit. So the question is beginning to be widely asked:

What is Unitarianism? The briefest answer is, that it is that form of Christianity which holds to the primitive faith in the simple Unity of God—that God is one, not a Trinity; and which looks upon Jesus Christ as the greatest and holiest of Teachers, but not God. Around this great central position have commonly grouped themselves some other beliefs of hardly less importance. Thus Unitarians regard Man as the child of God—not "fallen" and totally depraved, but only slowly rising; Salvation, as deliverance from sin, including everything that heals and helps man towards goodness and God; Heaven and Hell—not separate worlds, but what men make of their own lives, both in this world and the world to come, while in no world can man ever go beyond the love and goodness of God. Unitarians, also, while reverencing the Bible as the text-book of religion, have always regarded it (and in this they no longer stand alone, for the more thoughtful scholars of all Churches are now taking much the same ground) as the records of God's gradual revelation of his truth and will—but human records, to be studied with perfect freedom in order to distinguish the Divine from the merely human.

This is the common position of Unitarians. This is their general way of looking at the subject of religion. But while there is quite as much agreement among them as among the members of any other group of churches,—

Unitarians have no formal creed. They do not shape these beliefs into any set authoritative form which must be accepted either by churches or individuals, but urge upon all to think for themselves, and leave their churches entirely open to the reception of new truth.

A Wanderer's Return.

"When he (the prodigal) came to himself he said —I will go to my father."—Luke xv., 17-18.

George Gameson was hot-headed and impetuous. He had left home so as to have more freedom from restraint. He thought his father too strict and particular.

His father let him go, knowing his son would be certain to "go wrong" and get into trouble. There was no way of saving the lad from it. To lock him up would not make him look at things in the right way; and appeal and persuasion somehow he put down to wrong motives, and so misunderstood kind attempts to lead him aright. "If he will not take guidance from me, the suffering he is sure to bring on himself will teach him wisdom," mused his father.

So George went, cut himself loose from "leading strings," and had it his own way. And when he indulged in evil practices, he stifled conscience and all sense of shame in the excuse that it was not in his nature to do otherwise. "Even if I really tried to be any different," he once thought, "there would not be any merit in it, for the best a man can do is but 'filthy rags.'" He had heard that said by some of the conventional religionists.

George went from bad to worse, and gradually came to have a disreputable look about him. He had at last come so low that he was dependent upon getting any kind of occasional employment—odd jobs, here and there, even to get bread. Now and then he thought of home, but was too proud to think of returning there in such a wretched condition. His brother Jack would sneer at him, perhaps—at any rate, look down upon him. His mother—well—he put thoughts of his mother away from his mind.

One night he was resting by the side of a road, and, from sheer weariness, fell asleep. Soon afterwards, before it was quite dark, a parish constable came along and discovered him, and gave him a kick to rouse him, and moved him on. George resented the kick and spoke angrily to the constable, and the officer took George to prison. A neighbouring justice sentenced George to "seven days." In that prison, with dry bread and water for his food, shut out from the world, George seemed to drink the cup of bitterness to the dregs. All his past came before him. "Fool that I am!" he exclaimed. And in that gloomy cell he wept like a child, and was utterly broken in spirit.

George's parents hungered after their stray son.

One night in the darkness he returned. He hoped that they would all have gone to bed.

"Come in, lad; we've been looking for thee, and we are glad you've come!"

And he felt himself almost carried in. Scarcely had he got within the threshold than his mother met him and showered kisses upon him, saying:

"Oh, my poor boy, I thank God you have come." And she gave a searching, hungering look into his face. She saw that he was worn and ill; and as she looked at her poor wanderer she saw a deathly pallor come over his features, and George suddenly fell fainting into his father's arms. They laid him on a couch and quickly applied restoratives, and then got him to bed.

Next morning he was delirious. His rambling talk was a curious jumble of sayings, amongst which there was something about "I have sinned against heaven"; "What a fool I've been"; "I'll make amends"; "kick"; "constable"; "magistrate"; "prison"; "worthless son"; "cruel to father and mother."

The next night, George still in bed, there was a serious family conference downstairs. The father talked to his sons and daughters.

"When George comes downstairs again, do not say anything or do anything, even by a look, to make him feel that he is any worse than you are."

So Jack did not sneer, nor did any of the brothers and sisters by even a look make George feel that he was a scapegrace. And George was astonished. Their loving kindness touched him to the very roots of his being. He recovered; he made amends for the past by resolute determination to be a good man. His sufferings had taught him lessons which would never be obliterated from his mind. He had foolishly gone through hell to get to heaven, when he might have taken a better and a shorter way.

Postal Missions.

In connection with the Unitarian movement, both in England and America, there are Postal Missions, which exist for the purpose of spreading a knowledge of Unitarianism by distribution of literature, by correspondence, and other means. Inquirers writing to a postal mission secretary can get information and literature gratis through the post. These missions usually advertise in newspapers and periodicals, so as to attract the attention of truth-seekers who desire to have more light on theological problems. In the United Kingdom there exist about 23 of these local organisations, and they are all affiliated to the Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union, which has its centre in London. The following advertisement has been sent to "Unity":—Will readers new to Unitarianism please note this advertisement, and respond to the offer made therein?

UNITARIAN READING—FREE.

Rev. Stopford A. Frooke, M.A.--THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.
Rev. C J. Street, M.A.—A RATIONAL VIEW OF THE BIBLE.
Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A.—FAITH IN JESUS.

These Publications sent Free, also information on Unitarianism. Apply by letter to Miss F. HILL, 9, HEATH STREET, HAMPSTEAD N.W.

The Light Divine.

In workman's cot, in Nazareth town,
A Hebrew child was born,
In whom the light of heaven came down,
To change earth's night to dawn;
That child was taught to love the Light,
To cheer all hearts that pine;
And when he grew to manhood's might,
He said: The Light must shine!

As acorn into oak doth grow,
As seedling into flower;
So Jesus grew, and learned to know
The secret springs of power.
He saw in every child of earth
The heavenly light divine,
And called on all to prove their worth,
And make their light to shine.

With open eye to Truth and Love,
He looked within, without;
In men he saw, in God above,
Heaven's glory round about.
To outcast people he drew nigh,
And bade them not repine:
"God's sons are ye as much as I.
O let your glory shine!"

There comes in any child on earth
A ray of God's own light;
And every human soul at birth
Is filled with heavenly might.
What was in Jesus is in each,
The glory made to shine;
We honour him in deeds and speech
When we make life divine. H.B.S.

Birth Stories of Jesus.

By J. H. CROOKER, D.D.

When it is said that we cannot now accept as a literal record of historical facts the accounts in Matthew and Luke, which tell of a special star, the visits of angels, and the strange birth; when we are told that this is poetry, beautiful and interesting poetry—then many a heart feels chilled, and from many a life the light of heaven seems to fade. But a little calm reflection will show us that what we gain by this conclusion is vastly greater than what is lost.

As strange as the statement may seem to some when it is first heard, it is nevertheless true that only as we admit the poetical character of these stories do they become of greatest historic value to us. They most fully reveal the real Jesus when freely read as legends. They most truly demonstrate his greatness as a historical figure, when we interpret them as products of the loving appreciation of his friends, as it sought to express itself in poetic symbols.

What do we really lose, and what do we really gain? Let us see. We lose the wonder-child as a physical marvel impossible for science to accept; we gain fresh insight into the spiritual influence of Jesus. Religion escapes from the bondage of miracle and enters into new moral power. We lose the outward prodigies that violate natural law; we gain a better understanding of the essential quality of the Master's life which gave him, and which continues to give him, marvellous power over human hearts. Religion escapes from the necessity of apology, and it is now able to appeal to the consciences of men free from the handicap of superstition. We lose the song of goodwill as sung by angels in whom the modern mind has ceased to believe; we gain a clear view of the impression which the Prophet of Nazareth made upon his friends. He inspired them to live in the spirit of goodwill. Jesus himself was the supreme choirmaster who taught them to sing to the wide world the angelic song of peace through goodwill. Religion escapes from the worship of the mere letter and lays hold of the moral power which the poem symbolises. And are there not great gains in this change in our point of view, and in our use of the Gospel story?

. . . . . .

What is the story of the virgin birth but a report of the popular feeling in the apostolic time, that Jesus was a man so supremely pure that he must have had an unusual origin? What is the story that attributes his paternity to the Holy Spirit but the testimony of his disciples to the spirituality of his life—an obvious fact which they tried in this way to explain? What is the story of the guiding star but an embodiment of their confidence in him as heaven sent, because his life was so heavenly? What is the story of the Magi, with their gifts, but their public declaration of an appreciation so large and tender that they, too, would give all that they possessed to do him honour? What is the story of the angelic chorus heard by the watching shepherds —"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of goodwill"—but the description of the blessed ministry which Jesus has actually performed for mankind; what the disciples themselves had heard sung on the heights of their own being as they communed with Jesus and grew into his spirit?

The life of Jesus had been pre-eminently a life of goodwill. Just because this was true, the song of goodwill grew up spontaneously in their hearts, and was attributed to the angels. We have here an explanation of the origin and character of Jesus; but it is an explanation made by reverent love, not in logical statements, but in poetical symbols. We are not obliged to accept their explanation. Indeed, we cannot. But their poem is first-class historical material, if rightly used, being complete proof of the quality and extent of Jesus's influence upon them. This is surely a more spiritual and a more scientific use of these birth stories than the old dogmatists made of them.—(From "The Supremacy of Jesus.")

"UNITY," 1905.—With the January issue some new and attractive features will be introduced, including a "Home Circle" page, and something especially for the young people. Suitable cuttings of poems and short stories invited, and suggestions for making "Unity" more useful. Write to Editor, Ivy House, Mottram, Manchester.

Unitarian Tributes to Jesus.

The following representative tributes to Jesus from prominent Unitarian Christians should dispose of the saying that Unitarians do not believe in Christ.

THE GREATNESS OF JESUS.

By WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

This was the greatness of Jesus Christ. He felt, as no other felt, a union of mind with the human race, felt that all had a spark of that same intellectual and immortal flame which dwelt in him. I insist on this view of his character, not only to encourage us to aspire after a likeness to Jesus, I consider it as peculiarly fitted to call forth love toward him. If I regard Jesus as an august stranger, belonging to an entirely different class of existence from myself, having no common thoughts or feelings with me, and looking down upon me with only such a sympathy as I have with an inferior animal, I should regard him with a vague awe; but the immeasurable space between us would place him beyond friendship and affection. But when I feel that all minds form one family, that I have the same nature with Jesus, and that he came to communicate with me, by his teaching, example, and intercession, his own mind, to bring me into communion with what was sublimest, purest, happiest in himself, then I can love him as I love no other being, excepting only him who is the Father alike of Christ and of the Christians.

ONE MAN WAS TRUE.

By RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there. Alone in all history, he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world.

The excellence of Jesus, and of every true teacher, is that he affirms the Divinity in him and in us—not thrusts himself between it and us.

Jesus speaks always from within, and in a degree that transcends all others. In that is the miracle. I believe beforehand that it ought to be so. All men stand continually in the expectation of the appearance of such a teacher.

THE MEASURE OF JESUS.

By THEODORE PARKER.

His life is the perpetual rebuke of all time since. It condemns ancient civilisation, it condemns modern civilisation. Wise men we have since had, and good men; but this Galilean youth strode before the world whole thousands of years, so much of divinity was in him. His words solve the questions of this present age. In him the God-like and the human met and embraced, and a divine life was born. Measure him by the world's greatest sons—how poor they are! Try him by the best of men—how little and low they appear! Exalt him as much as we may, we shall yet perhaps come short of the mark. But still was he not our brother; the son of man, as we are; the son of God, like ourselves? His excellence—was it not human excellence? His wisdom, love piety—sweet and celestial as they were—are they not what we also may attain? In him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit that enlightened the humble. Viewed in this way, how beautiful is the life of Jesus! Heaven has come down to earth, or, rather, earth has become heaven. The Son of God, come of age, has taken possession of his birthright. The brightest revelation is this of what is possible for all men—if not now, at least hereafter.

Not until the truth of the Gospel has been passed upon and taken up into one's life, has the authority of Jesus been perfected. His helpfulness to us is seen, not in the orthodoxy of our opinions, but in the divinity of our lives. Our salvation does not consist in our assertion that he was the Son of God, but in being ourselves true sons of God.

—J. H. Crooker, D.D.

Jesus was supreme, pure love, and never, while the heart of man remains, will it forget to answer that love with love. If the future religion of the world is rooted in the simple truths he taught concerning God and the soul of man, the propagation, the inspiration, the driving power of that doctrine is rooted in a personal love of Jesus Christ, such as filled the heart of St. Paul. Only we must clear his image; we must see him as he is.

—Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., LL.D.

I cannot help regarding those half-poetical stories of miraculous birth as the growth of a later thought—the first steps in that kind of glorification which, once started, could find no halting-place until it had made him out to be God. I fall back from those later stories upon the really earlier Gospel pictures of him, as one born of good parents, in pure marriage. And then people ask if we regard him as a mere man. "Mere man?" I hate the phrase. There ought to be no such word as "a mere man" in the mouths of those who have ever learned Christ's teaching of the living God so near to all, and waiting to dwell in every open soul. All manhood that is worth anything must be Man plus God. In Christ we have Man plus all of God that man's nature at its highest can receive or absorb; and still Man—not God.—Brooke Herford, D.D.

I yield to none in love and reverence for the gracious Master, whose words touch me as no other words have ever touched me, and whose person seems to me the most lovable and reverend, the purest, the most beautiful, the holiest that has ever worn human flesh.—R. A. Armstrong, B.A.

Why "Presbyterian?"

Quite a considerable number of Unitarian chapels in England are Presbyterian Meeting Houses. They were originally built by English Presbyterians. Many of them still keep the name "Presbyterian," in such cases as Bury Presbyterian Church, Hapton (Norfolk) Presbyterian Chapel, Hindley Presbyterian Chapel, Kirkstead Presbyterian Chapel, Newbury Presbyterian Chapel, Stourbridge Presbyterian Chapel, and others.

The congregations meeting in these chapels are made up almost entirely of professed Unitarians, and the ministers who preach in them are Unitarians. There are Unitarian families connected with them which are of direct descent from the English Presbyterians who first built the chapels. Those English Presbyterians were Calvinists and Trinitarians in doctrine. But they refused to pledge themselves to or be pledged to any theological doctrines. They would not sign any creed, and when they built their chapels they settled them by trust deeds that were perfectly open and free from any statement of doctrine beyond that of "the worship of God," refusing to fetter their successors or to bind them to any theological doctrines. And so every succeeding generation attending those meeting-houses, being allowed room to grow in their thought under ministers enjoying like freedom, gradually drifted away from the old Calvinism, from Trinitarianism, through Arianism, to the Unitarian position. Thus, while worshipping in the same chapel, and retaining the Presbyterian name, the congregations for some generations past—ever since the time of Dr. Joseph Priestley—have been professedly Unitarian.

Very early, while still orthodox and Trinitarian, the English Presbyterians lapsed from the Presbyterian form of church government, and in actual usage became Independents. So that both in doctrine and church government English Presbyterianism died out except in name. Why, then, should the name be retained? There is no reason, except a historical one. But that is deemed quite sufficient, for the congregations meeting now in these chapels—the direct descendants of the English Presbyterians—are proud of their pedigree. They shrink from such a break from a natural ancestry as the repudiation of the old name would bring about. It is the historical connection by which they stand in retaining the name.

Consequently district associations of Unitarian Churches include those which are of Presbyterian descent, and which still call their chapels and congregations by that name. There is the Manchester District Association of Presbyterian and Unitarian Churches; the North Midland Presbyterian and Unitarian Association; the Provincial Assembly of Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers and Congregations of Lancashire and Cheshire; the National Triennial Conference of Unitarian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-Subscribing or Kindred Congregations, etc.

There is an orthodox Presbyterianism in England which has no historical connection with the old English Presbyterians. In 1836 two presbyteries were opened in England in connection with the Church of Scotland. In 1876 all the Presbyterian Churches of the Scotch connexion became united under the title of the "Presbyterian Church of England." These Scotch Churches complain that the old chapels used by Unitarian descendants of English Presbyterians have no right to use or retain the name Presbyterian, and that no Unitarian associations ought to use it in their title. It is somewhat confusing, but, when explained, it is difficult to see how the position can well be changed.

In Ireland there are 39 Unitarian Churches, and more than 20 of them date back to Presbyterianism, and still call their congregations Presbyterian, and continue to this day under the Presbyterian form of church government. The word "Presbyterian" denotes a kind of church government, and has no doctrinal significance. Would it be right of these Irish Unitarians, still under Presbyterian organisation, to reject and repudiate the name. Why should Lord Smith drop the name Smith, if, unlike his ancestors, he no longer follows the Smith trade? And in the same way, how can it be wrong in England for the lineal descendants of the English Unitarians to identify themselves still with their ecclesiastical ancestry?

A Christmas Book.

["The Supremacy of Jesus," by Joseph Henry Crooker, author of "Religious Freedom in American Education," "Problems in American Society," "Jesus Brought Back," etc. Published by the American Unitarian Association, Boston, U.S.A. 80 cents net.]

In our last issue there was a notice of Dr. Crooker's pamphlet on "The Unitarian Church." This is more than a pamphlet; it is a well printed and beautifully bound book of 186 pages. The subject is one of great interest; many books have been written upon the same theme by writers of every school of thought, and there may be some people who have begun to wonder whether or not all has been said or written upon it than can be said. Any who read Dr. Crooker's book will have their eyes opened to see that there is yet much more to be said. Dr. Crooker has certainly in these pages uttered many things that are new, and with a convincing power that leaves the reader quite certain also that they are true. There is a freshness in the writer's thought, a warmth of sympathy in his style and such faith in a real appeal to fact and to life as serve to carry the reader along with a quickened interest amounting almost to fascination.

Not yet has the world arrived at a true appreciation of Jesus as he really was. But the writer of this little volume takes us a long way towards it. The Man of Nazareth commands attention more than any other amongst the great humans of the ages; and now more than ever in this era of free thought

and most critical inquiry and research. Dr. Crooker seeks to show that Jesus is supreme amongst men, and to explain the secret of his unique and wide-spreading influence. In five luminous chapters he inquires into "The Historical Position of Jesus," treats on "Jesus and Gospel Criticism," gives "A New Appreciation of Jesus," describes Him as "The Master of Inner Life," and explains what "The Authority of Jesus" really is.

Dr. Crooker says that Jesus "felt himself to be the Messiah of Israel is evident." In this statement he no doubt has many competent critics on his side, but against it there are at least the opinions of such scholars as Bruno Bauer, Havet, Dr. Martineau, Wellhausen, Lagarde, and Dr. Wrede, who agree in saying that Jesus "never claimed the Messianic character at all." (See Carpenter's "Bible in the Nineteenth Century," pp. 377-8.)

But that is perhaps the only statement in the book which Unitarians generally would be likely to question. It might go without saying that Dr. Crooker's views are thoroughly Unitarian on all important matters of doctrine. He regards Jesus as a purely human product as much as Buddha and Confucius or Mohammed. He accounts for all that Jesus was and all that he did, in a perfectly natural way. As the title of the book implies, he regards Jesus as supremely at the head of all the world's greatest teachers. To those who do not understand how the Gospel records came into existence, Chapter II. contains just the effective help needed. To all readers of Robert Blatchford's "God and my Neighbour" who incline to think that Jesus is a myth, and that we cannot be sure that there ever was such a character, this book is perhaps the most conclusive literary production on the other side, because it deals with the subject on rational and scientific principles. Jesus is pourtrayed here as a sublimely noble man who wins our love and our most devoted service. It is a book that will be of immense benefit to the general reader, to every truth seeker, and it is invaluable as a help to Sunday school teachers and the members of adult classes, and, lastly, it may be said that from its subject matter and style, and the attractive appearance of both pages and covers, it is peculiarly suitable as a Christmas present.

"UNITY," 1905.—The Editor will be assisted in contributions by the following staff of helpers:—Revs. H. J. Rossington, M.A., Wilfred Harris, M.A., W. C. Hall, M.A., J. M. Bass, M.A., C. Roper, B.A., A. C. Fox, B.A., N. Anderton, B.A., G. Critchley, B.A., W. E. Atack, J. Morgan Whiteman, H. Kelsey White, W. Holmshaw, Messrs. M. G. Hering, M.A., Richard Robinson, and others.

A "Unity" School and Home Reading Scheme, with examinations, certificates, and prizes, is under consideration. Will friends interested in promoting a systematic knowledge of Unitarian principles and literature amongst young people please send ideas and suggestions to the Editor, Ivy House, Mottram, Manchester?

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